

Subject: Rolling thunder draft

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*Alliance for Democracy
To ~~Doris~~ Andrea Radak
Rayne & Chris
& Mike*

Thank you.

*I thank Kristy Halmquist
& Ted Dooley and his beautiful wife
Ted is on the Board of AFD
Chairman
F is man
Current
work on*

You've heard that wonderful Margaret Mead quote about how you should never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world, and that, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Cry Justice

There's the neo-con version (are they called neo cons? Something like that—let's just call them con men) Anyway, there's a Bush version of that quote: Never doubt that a small group of well armed men..etc.)

I like the Margaret Mead version better. But I think it's time we stopped repeating that quotation and came to some agreement about what we happy few might do over the next five years or so. That is the purpose of my remarks today.

Before I get into that let me say that, before we can think long term, we must win the election in 2004. If you are a working woman, I want you to please agree to distribute voter registration forms at your workplace and to work with your managers to make sure that everyone gets an opportunity to vote. You can get all the materials you need at Working Women Vote, which is a part of the GrannyD.com website. Working women are the key to this election, especially in the 21 swing states where Bush won or lost by less than 5%.

Now. Do that. And now let's look at the longer term view. For, even when we win next November, we have difficult work ahead.

You know, there are two kinds of politics in the world: the politics of love and the politics of fear. Love is about cooperation, sharing and inclusion. It is about the elevation of each individual to a life neither suppressed nor exploited, but instead nourished to rise to its full potential--a life for its own sake and so that we may all benefit by the gift of that life. Fear and the politics of fear is about narrow ideologies that separate us, militarize us, imprison us, exploit us, control us, overcharge us, demean us, bury us alive in debt and anxiety and then bury us dead in cancers and wars. The politics of love and the politics of fear are now pitted against each other in a naked struggle that will define not only the 21st Century but centuries to come. We are the Sons and Daughters of Liberty in that struggle, indeed we are. Let us not shirk from the mission that fate has bestowed upon us, for it has done so as a blessing.

This struggle is real. A very close friend of mine, a college student, spent this summer in Guatemala to help small communities prosper in ways that support their local environments. Those villagers and their environments are under siege by international big business, using a captured U.S. Government to push through damaging treaties such as the proposed Central America Free Trade Agreement and the hemisphere-wide Free Trade Area of the Americas. The villagers of Guatemala want global FAIR trade, but the corporations and their captive governments want FREE trade. If fair trade wins, a global middle class will rise, as farmers and craftsmen are paid fairly for their work, and as they gain a ^{Better} voice in their governance and their environments are protected for their future generations. If free trade wins, it is colonial exploitation, torture and murder written in blood across another century.

Or do you wonder if it is really an honest difference of opinion

as to which policies are best for the people? On July 24, three armed gunmen broke into the home where my young friend was staying in Guatemala, dragging her and another young woman to the ground, covering their heads with blankets. These young women began to count their lives in seconds. For three-quarters of an hour, the gunmen went through the biodiversity files in the home. Big business interests in Guatemala, in league with elements of the military, are trying to push-through the passage of free trade agreements and to do it they must suppress all dissent. Their partner and blood brother is the U.S. Government. Not the U.S. Government that we see, but the U.S. Government that much of the rest of the world sees: a world of C.I.A. treachery, the training of death squad leaders in our own Army facilities within the U.S., and a big business-friendly White House that winks and nods as great injustices continue.

The two women survived, but tens of thousands have not, because they are in the way of big business. It is not an honest difference of opinion; it is a global struggle of people versus a global crime syndicate that counts taken-over governments and multinational corporations among its members.

There is a term now in common use in Latin America that is confusing to us Americans. It is called neoliberalism and it is a very dirty word indeed among the brave pro-democracy and fair trade groups throughout the Americas. "Neoliberal" sounds like the happy return of the Kennedys, but it is not. Nor is it about some resurgence of the liberal values of the Square Deal or the New Deal or the War on Poverty or any of those great moments when we called upon our best instincts to cooperatively address our largest needs as a free and self-governing people. The liberation that we meant then when we used the word "liberal" was the liberation from poverty,

despair and ignorance, the liberation of the mind through public education, the liberation of the citizen through universal voting, equal rights and equal opportunity, and the freedom to prosper from the fruits of our labors. But that is not the liberal that is meant by neoliberal. It means newly free to rampage. It means free of government constraint. It means free trade over fair trade.

"Neoliberalism" refers to the liberation of a giant beast that we, the ordinary people of America—the farmers, the townsmen and townswomen, the trade unionists--tied down to the earth early in the 20th Century and it is that beast that has now gotten himself loose again to do great damage to us all. The deadly meanderings of this beast are most apparent in the most labor-intensive regions of the world, but the beast is here, too, and he has brought misery and suffering into your life and mine, stealing our water, blowing up our mountains, fouling our air and seas, and stealing our lives and our future at every turn. Neoliberalism is the colonialism department of neoconservatism.

How did we handle this evil giant before? The Teddy Roosevelt Progressives, and the William Jennings Bryan Populists before him, were part of a successful effort to tie down the giant. After the Civil War, at the high point of the Industrial Age--the age of railroads, oil and steel--great corporations and trusts were created that towered high over the human-scaled businesses of America's Main Streets and cast dark shadows over human liberty and happiness. These monstrosities treated humans as slaves. They robbed the public wealth and were properly called the robber barons of that Gilded Age. These giants freely stalked, destroying the economics of family farms and family businesses, corrupting our governments with great bribes and corrupt deals, and polluting our food, our land, water and air.

They tore our families apart and dragged us into the hardest of hard times, as they have been liberated to do once more.

I am not talking about all corporations or all big business. Corporations of reasonable size are but groups of people. Beyond some point, however, the humanity falls away from an organization and all that is left is the will to power and profit. They care not that our seas and atmosphere are rapidly changing in ways that may lead to disaster and famine of unimaginable scale. They care not because they are not human and they have moved beyond human values. They do not need the fresh air or the water or the mountains or the birds. They are a kind of virus or a cancer, all prettied up with a nice logo and television commercials to tell us the most outrageous lies, one after the other. For in reality, they crush us under their boots and they pay off our political leaders with campaign contributions and other bribes. They trample on diversity of all kinds, including human personality, as fewer and fewer kinds of people can prosper in the world they are casting, and more and more of us are marginalized.

The big corporate empires would be powerless if they were not in league with crooked politicians. I do not mean that the politicians necessarily know what they are doing. The corruption is so immense that they cannot even see it, even when it pays their spouse and finances their reelection. These, the happily blind, populate Capitol Hill and our state capitols like vermin who have been for generations in deep caves where they gradually lose their vision and their other senses, too.

Well, two and a quarter centuries was a good run for this democracy, but a rebirth is long overdue, and it is indeed necessary if we are to save our freedoms and our human

values here and abroad, and if we are to protect the beauty and sustaining graces of nature, including the positive sides of human nature.

What that Republican Teddy Roosevelt understood at the beginning of the 20th Century was that, if the rights and fortunes of the human scale are to be protected, if the rights and fortunes of average Americans, small businesses, family farms and Main Street are to be protected from the ravages of overscaled business giants, then government must grow in size and power to protect us all. The big business wing of the Republican Party, under Taft, defeated the family business wing of the Republican^s and their leader, Teddy Roosevelt. It would take another Roosevelt of another party to turn the Square Deal into the New Deal, under which government greatly expanded to protect the people.

That has not been altogether a happy strategy, as large government has its own costs to us and its own abuses. The Libertarians are our new and brave allies in the defending of the Bill of Rights from Bush's anti-American attacks through his henchmen Ashcroft and Ridge. But our friends the Libertarians would have us do away with most all of our government. Anyone who has paid too many taxes or dealt with too many rude and overly-powerful bureaucrats understands the Libertarian's feelings, but I ask at least the intellectually honest Libertarians—and there are many of them—to wisely see that government, which is indeed a system of restraint—must be matched in strength and scale to the corporate monstrosities that now have the ability and the willingness to destroy us—to blow up the entire Appalachian Range for the profits of coal, for example, as is now happening --or to steal for profit the water supply of whole regions, or to enslave whole regions at low wages rather than allow fair trade. Or to move every one of our

good jobs overseas. These inhuman and inhumane organizations are stealing our lives and all nature around us.

Only government is large enough and powerful enough to reign-in the corporations whose cold heartedness trades lives for profits all over the world. Republican Teddy Roosevelt began the buildup of big government solely to protect us from overlarge corporations so that they might not overwhelm us human beings. In doing so, he created a split in the Republican Party, and big business interests won. Perhaps the rational solution is to scale them both back —corporations and government--and let individual enterprise and individual freedom, and its many middle class treasures and blessings, blossom in the old battlefield. But there is no leadership for that, and governments are being stripped of all regulatory powers by the false religion of a new deity, the unfettered, liberated market.

So, no longer protected by governments, we must fight the battle that is before us: human beings versus monstrous corporations and their bodysnatched government puppets. It is a battle of human scale versus monstrous scale, love versus fear.

What is happening now, of course, is that the neo's in the Bush Administration--you can call them neoliberals or neoconservatives, though they are neo nothing except perhaps neocolonial and neolithic—What's happening now is that the neo's in this Administration are starving government very much on purpose, and they tell us as much in their writing.

Huge military commitments, huge tax cuts to the wealthiest individuals and corporations, and huge budget deficits leave no money for the old New Deal programs like Social Security or

*less money for our boys & girls
in the services*

newer programs such as Medicare. No money for schools, hospitals, police, fire, veterans—no money for anything but the front lines of a corporatized military and a militarized corporatocracy. A starved government—once our government—has no ability to restrain the liberated giant or to investigate his abuses or prosecute his crimes. And so, two years after Enron, ^{ONLY} ~~but~~ one person is behind bars. It is not for lack of villains, and, as all California cries, it is not for lack of victims.

All right. When did this monster get untied? He did so in the era of corporate raiding, permitted and smiled upon by the Reagan Administration. Reagan admired those cowboy businessmen of the 1980s—the corporate raiders who engineered hostile corporate takeovers. But those takeovers, allowed by hamstrung regulators, caused all large and mid-sized American corporations to go on a rampage of streamlining, outsourcing, wage-cutting, plant closings and job exporting. They did so to make themselves takeover-proof. It was no longer respectable to make a respectable profit and to serve your community with good jobs and fairly-priced goods and services. The new mentality of profit maximization and unlimited mergers and no government control, was the untying of the monster and it was no accident. The ropes were further loosened in the greedy and morally corrupt Clinton and Bush administrations, until we find ourselves now with a government of, by and for the corporations. The new model CEO was the ruthless costcutter and dealmaker. CEO salaries went unbelievably high, where they have stayed. For every hundred dollars that the average American worker makes, these top CEOs make fifty thousand dollars. It is a moral outrage in the land of so many homeless and struggling and worried people. But the giant does not care if we struggle or worry. The giant does not care that every homeless person we walk by is a

all

humiliation to us, ~~too~~, as members of a community no longer able to take care of our own. It is a humiliation designed to impress upon us that we are not in charge. That we must do as we are told if we do not want a similar fate. It is concentration camp logic.

A century ago, the ordinary people of America joined together to tie down the giant. The antitrust laws and environmental laws and the rights of workers to organize and collectively bargain for wages and benefits all joined to nurture the restoration of a great middle class—always the bedrock of democracy. The robber barons, the great giants, remained down, no longer free, liberated, to do as they pleased in crushing us with their great wealth and political power. And so it was for a time.

And now, loosed again, these giants have taken over our television networks and most of our newspapers, turning them against our interests and against the truth itself. These giants send our young people off to fight their commercial wars—great profitable ventures.

How free are we now, friends? Check you^v bills and your bank account. How much time and leisure do you have to enjoy your life and friends? How is your place in your community as a free and equal citizen? Or are we drones that go to work, go to bed to rest for more work, go to the stores to spend all that we earn and more, and watch television to receive our instructions what to buy the next day, if we have jobs at all? Is that freedom by some other name? It is not freedom by any name and it is nothing to push on the rest of the world in the name of freedom.

These corporations steal our time with their computerized telephone switchboards and their long waiting lines and few

employees. They steal our jobs and our benefits and our pensions. They use fear at every turn to sell us a little protection, and a little more. And they steal our senators and congressmen just when they might have earned their keep protecting our democracy.

What shall we do, my fellows, about these corporate giants stalking our earth freely? How shall we get our children home from their wars and ourselves free from their captivities?

We the people, acting together in the new ways made possible by electronic communication, must become the large counterbalance to these powers—the counterbalance that our government no longer provides. By communicating and acting in concert, we can reward the good companies and thereby keep our money clear of the worst. We can make our demand for fair trade products and provide the shift in market share that will change the practices of those businesses that now exploit our brothers and sisters here and around the world. We can agree together which television news channel is the least objectionable, and agree to watch only that --for our watching and buying habits are votes for the kind of world we will live in . By nudging market share, our small group of dedicated people can influence great changes. We have the tools now to do this ~~now~~. It will not be an easy task, but we have no real alternative if we are to save the world, and that is what we must decide to do.

Tell your favorite coffee house that, as of Earth Day, 2004, you will only buy fair trade coffee. Let us give a "fair warning for fair trade" in this and other areas of products and services. Let us develop the best information about who is doing what, and let us use our new tools of electronic democracy to come to consensus regarding which companies deserve our support—a

reverse boycott on a global scale. I will try to put information on my website about who is helping in this new effort, and I have put some little cards there you can print to give a fair warning for fair trade to your favorite shops and other companies. And let us use each subsequent Earth Day to push for more improvement on every front, giving our fair warnings to move progress along. Let Americans and other people of the earth join us or not. But let them decide and know for themselves which side they are on.

WITH CLEAN ELECTIONS BOTH FEDERAL AND IN THE STATES.

Yes, let's continue our efforts to reform our government, most especially with campaign finance reform. But, with revolutionary new tools, we are capable of redefining democracy at a critical moment. Let us not be shy about it for time is short. We stand for love and fairness in the world. That is not gentle work, nor is it painless or bloodless, as so many people around the world know.

This is, after all, our world and our lives. Do you remember those few weeks after the 9/11 attacks when we, as an automatic antidote to the inhumanity of those attacks, sought to reassert our humanity again in a million little ways? For that moment we came out of the hypnosis we have come to live under and we saw the Eden of human love and cooperation. We must not fall back under that hypnosis again, as it is a waste of our lives. The forces of life and death are in struggle, for those are the other names for love and fear. Let us choose life and love, and happily use our selves up in loving service to one another.

Thank you. And remember to sign up at Working Women Vote—it's on the Granny D.com website!